

108TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. CON. RES. 56

Expressing the sense of the Congress that a commemorative postage stamp should be issued honoring Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, a Great American hero.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 26, 2003

Mr. CORZINE (for himself, Mr. WARNER, Mr. LAUTENBERG, and Mrs. CLINTON) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Governmental Affairs

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of the Congress that a commemorative postage stamp should be issued honoring Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone, a Great American hero.

Whereas Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone was born in 1916 in Buffalo, New York, son of Salvatore and Dora Basilone, one of 10 children;

Whereas John Basilone was raised and educated in Raritan, New Jersey;

Whereas, at the age of 18, John Basilone enlisted in the United States Army, principally seeing garrison service in the Philippines;

Whereas, after his honorable discharge in 1937, Sergeant Basilone, known by his comrades as “Manila John”, returned to Raritan;

Whereas, seeing the storm clouds of war hovering over the Nation, and believing that his place was with this country’s fighting forces, Sergeant Basilone enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in July 1940;

Whereas, on October 24 and 25, 1942, on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, Sergeant Basilone was a member of “C” Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division, and was in charge of 2 sections of heavy machine guns defending a narrow pass that led to Henderson Airfield;

Whereas, although Sergeant Basilone and his machine gunners were vastly outnumbered and without available reinforcements, Sergeant Basilone and his fellow Marines fought valiantly to check the savage and determined assault by the Japanese Imperial Army;

Whereas, for this action, Sergeant Basilone was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor and sent home a hero;

Whereas, in December 1944, Sergeant Basilone’s restlessness to rejoin his fellow Marines, who were fighting the bloody island-to-island battles en route to the Philippines and Japan, prompted him to volunteer again for combat;

Whereas, on Iwo Jima, on February 19, 1945, Sergeant Basilone again distinguished himself by single-handedly destroying an enemy blockhouse while braving heavy-caliber fire;

Whereas, minutes later, an artillery shell killed Sergeant Basilone and 4 of his platoon members;

Whereas Sergeant Basilone was posthumously awarded the Navy Cross and Purple Heart, and a life-sized bronze statue stands in Raritan, New Jersey, where “Manila John” is clad in battle dress and cradles a machine gun in his arms;

Whereas, in 1949, the United States Government commissioned a destroyer the U.S.S. Basilone, and in November 1951, Governor Alfred E. Driscoll posthumously awarded Sergeant Basilone the State of New Jersey’s highest decoration;

Whereas, following World War II, Sergeant Basilone’s remains were reinterred in the Arlington National Cemetery;

Whereas Sergeant Basilone was the first recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor awarded in World War II;

Whereas Sergeant Basilone was also awarded the Navy Cross and the Purple Heart, giving him the distinction of being the only enlisted Marine in World War II to receive all 3 medals; and

Whereas commemorative postage stamps have been commissioned to honor other great heroes in American history: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that—

3 (1) a commemorative postage stamp should be
4 issued by the United States Postal Service honoring
5 Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone; and

- 1 (2) the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee
- 2 should recommend to the Postmaster General that
- 3 such a stamp be issued.

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